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I. F. Stone's Weekly

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The Liberals and the Military Budget

The most striking political phenomena in the past week was the way American liberals abdicated their responsibility in dealing with military spending. One voice was raised here to warn, "while defense expenditures are necessary, they are for the most part a loss rather than a contribution to the national economy. . . . Defense expenditures drain away national resources which would otherwise be devoted to building up the nation's capital structure and improving the people's levels of living." But this warning did not come from Walter Reuther, but from Ralph J. Cordiner, president of General Electric, at the Eighth Annual Armed Forces Day Dinner. The budgetary manifesto issued by the ADA over the signatures of Reuther and 58 other liberals uncritically supported the President's budget. "Three fifths of the proposed budget goes for national defense," was all their statement said on this crucial subject. "Surely we agree that the security needs of the United States must be met despite the cost." It is strange when only a big business man talks as liberals used to.

Begging The Real Questions

Of course the nation's security must be met whatever the cost, but this is question-begging. The real question is whether we are to accept at face value the Pentagon's notion of what the real security needs and the real costs are. Here we need study and leadership on management and on policy. Is the money being spent carefully or wastefully? Are the intelligence and planning behind the military program sound? Are the country's economy and fate being tied to an arms race which can lead only to military domination and perhaps to war? These are questions on which liberals and labor leaders normally spoke out. Today they are silent.

A report filed here last Tuesday disclosed the kind of facts and made the kind of criticism which have normally come from liberals. It said 80 percent of all military procurement and 95 percent of aircraft procurement was now spent under negotiated mostly cost-plus contracts rather than competitive bidding, and that millions were being wasted because no basic cost principles had been worked out, and procurement-auditing practices were chaotic. It said that in the field of missiles, a costlier project than the atom bomb, evaluations "have consisted of briefings or presentations by directly interested groups, principally contractors' representatives and representatives of the sponsoring Services." It found that rivalry among the Services in the development of missiles, on which billions are being spent, "is getting completely out of control" and leading to great waste, with each of the three Services "striving to acquire an arsenel of weapons complete in itself to carry out any and all possible missions." It criticized the inflated and alarmist intelligence estimates of Soviet power which were used last year to "sell" Congress an accelerated big bomber program since scaled down as admittedly based on false information.

But this did not come from liberal critics. It came from a House Appropriations Subcommittee headed by Congressman Mahon of Texas. The liberal report on the budget put out last week-end by the Conference on Economic Progress treated the military budget quite differently. This report, by a group in which Reuther and Leon Keyserling are the guiding spirits, had much of value to contribute in the sphere of social welfare spending but in the field of defense spending it offered not one word of critical analysis. Its projected ideal budget figured actual security spending in 1956 as 40 billions and proposed by 1960 to raise this to 44 billion dollars. It gave aid and comfort to the Pentagon by estimating that military spending as a percentage of total national production had actually fallen in the past four years "from about 14 percent of total national production to about 9.6 percent— a decline of 31 percent" and it asks "whether we are risking our lives by these slashes." Is this liberalism?

The Pentagon as Sacred Cow

The two liberal statements, one by the ADA'ers, the other by the Conference on Economic Progress, made headlines as liberal support of the President on the budget. And on education and social welfare Eisenhower does deserve and need support against the economy bloc in Congress. But can these necessary expenditures be saved by uncritically accepting the military estimates? By treating the Pentagon as a sacred cow, is not the way prepared for appeasing the economy bloc by

(*Continued on Page Four*)

The Dollars Make The Difference

"In this whole program we do not seek to buy friends. We do not seek to make satellites."
—The President's Foreign Aid Broadcast, May 21.

"Since foreign aid programs assist in making bases on foreign soil available to the United States and help to add military strength to allies, their continuance is in the national interest. While it might be argued that allies should make themselves strong without our aid and should make bases available regardless of our assistance, it must be noted that there is an inclination in some free countries allied with us to divorce themselves from any involvment in the conflict of the great powers or to feel that their power is in any event too insignificant to be a factor in the outcome. Our support and assistance may well provide the decisive element in the decision to cast their lot with us and other free nations in a common defense effort."
—Final Report, Special Senate Committee to Study the Foreign Aid Program, May 13, page 9.

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No Such Spontaneous Outpouring As Once Greeted Marian Anderson

The Prayer Pilgrimage Must Be Counted Politically A Failure

I had hoped to see the District of Columbia so clogged with Negroes and their sympathizers on the third anniversary of the school decision that even the racists in Congress would have felt the emotional impact. As against those hopes and the NAACP's own expectations, the Prayer Pilgrimage must be counted a failure. As compared with the 75,000 who once turned out spontaneously to hear Marian Anderson sing from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, there was a crowd estimated by the police at 15,000 and by the NAACP at 27,000; it fell far short of the 50,000 which had been announced in advance as the goal.

With 400,000 Negroes in the District of Columbia and another 400,000 in nearby Baltimore, the Pilgrimage could have been made a resounding success right here at home. It is revealing that though Mordecai Johnson was among the speakers Howard University did not think the occasion important enough to suspend classes. On the eve of the rally only 700 rooms had been volunteered to house the expected 50,000, and only 30 of the 300-odd Negro churches here in Washington had agreed to open their doors as reception centers. I spent the morning walking about in the main Negro section of Washington and I was struck by the number of churches whose doors were locked and whose walls bore no welcoming banners.

The Deep South Untouched

The eight States of the deep South are not only untouched by integration but have dug in behind new legal barricades in defense of segrègation; the lines are hardening; Congress again will almost certainly adjourn without passing civil rights legislation; the NAACP is being outlawed in the South and its few white sympathizers terrorized. Yet Negroes here did not feel deeply enough to pour out in mass demonstration. The folk who came up here by bus, train and plane from Montgomery, Mobile, New Orleans and elsewhere in the South command respect. The blame for the poor turnout lies with the Northern Negro, with the leadership, with the white liberals and with the Labor movement.

Yet there was only one top rank labor leader, Jim Carey, on the steps of the Memorial. Except for District 65 of New York, the ILGWU and the UAW, there was little sign of labor activity in support of the Pilgrimage. Only a scattering of whites were in the great crowd before the Memorial, and only one white Minister, the Rev. Ross A. Weston, of the Arlington, Va., Unitarian Church appeared on the program; Rabbi Norman Gerstenfeld, the other white who was supposed to participate, failed to show up. Senators Douglas and Javits, though on the printed program, pleaded previous engagements. Of all the white churches in the District of Columbia, only All Souls Unitarian and Waugh M.E. opened their doors to receive and feed the pilgrims.

The white press gave the meeting the barest minimum of advance publicity; the United Press put out a scare story on the eve of the pilgrimage about Communists infiltrating the gathering; a press conference on the eve by the Rev. Martin Luther King was poorly attended and marked by a yawning indifference to anything but this Red scare story. None of the top men from the top papers showed up. The arrival of the most significant Negro leader this country has developed in our time was not news.

Black Men Landed Too

"Next door, in the State of Virginia, they are celebrating the 350th anniversary of the landing of the first white men at Jamestown. It is usually forgotten that this is also the 338th anniversary of the coming of the first black men to America. During all those 338 years we and our white fellow Americans have sweated, toiled, sacrificed, fought and died for our common country. Yet, today from some of the talk and writing, one would think that we came here only yesterday, that out of a kind of charity we had been permitted to remain here, but that this country is not ours as much as it is any man's."

—Roy Wilkins, of the NAACP, at Prayer Pilgrimage

Lukewarm Northern Liberals

"What we are witnessing today in so many Northern communities is a sort of quasi-liberalism which is based on the principle of looking sympathetically at all sides. It is a liberalism so bent on seeing all sides that it fails to become committed to either side. It is a liberalism that is so objectively analytical that it is not subjectively committed. It is a liberalism which is neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. We call for a liberalism from the North which will be thoroughly committed to the ideal of racial justice and will not be deterred by the propaganda and subtle words of those who say, 'Slow up for a while, you are pushing too fast.'"

—Rev. Martin Luther King, at the Prayer Pilgrimage, May 17.

Apprehensive Leaders

The leaders of the white community were apprehensive and determined to play the affair down. But at the risk of injustice I must record my own feeling that the Negro leadership shared some of this apprehension. The Pilgrimage seems to have been a last minute compromise between those who wanted a "March on Washington" to demand action from Congress and those who wanted no move toward Washington at all. Everything was done to discourage spontaneous visits to Congressmen, and there was no visible effort to put either the President or Nixon on the spot by publicly asking for an audience. That invitation Nixon gave Rev, King at Ghana seems to have been eyewash for the Africans. Adam Clayton Powell in his speech did depart from text and suggest that visits be paid to the President and Vice-President, and to Johnson and Rayburn but nothing came of it. I believe the leaders were themselves afraid that the demonstration might get out of hand.

Perhaps one reason for the disappointing turnout is that it had no concrete political objective. Ministers who call Negroes to walk rather than ride humiliated have a program; but a summons to prayer is not action, especially for the younger generation in the North which is not as religious as its elders. There was hardly a speaker who did not in sonorous voice call on Moses to go down into Pharoah's land. I could not help but be moved; this is not mere rhetoric for the Negro. But there is a new generation who are less Negroes than ordinary Americans who happen to have dark skins, and we Americans are among the least religious of all peoples. The immense and wonderful assimilative power of America is doing to the Negro what it has done to the first and second generation of foreign born stock; the melting pot is breaking down the color barrier, too, despite the greater obstacles. The result is that the evangelists and demagogues of the older Negro leadership are giving way to newer, quieter and more honest men. Of these the most impressive is Rev. King; his warning that this is no time for demagogy was almost a rebuke to most of his fellow speakers. I will be disappointed if this 28-year old Minister does not develop into one of the great Americans of our time. But this "pilgrimage" he led left no impact on the Capitol. It will take more than prayer to move white politicians preparing again to bury the civil rights issue.

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Can There Be Common Ground With Those Who Do Not Really Believe in Freedom?

The New Forum for Socialist Education Before the Internal Security Committee

The mechanism of political intimidation was nakedly displayed in the brief hearing held by the Internal Security Committee here last Monday on the American Forum for Socialist Education. The formation of this group was announced on May 12. The hearing was held just eight days later. Five persons were subpoenaed: Clifford T. McAvoy, former New York Deputy Welfare Commissioner, long prominent in the American Labor Party; Dr. Albert Blumberg, a Communist awaiting sentence after conviction under the membership clause of the Smith Act; Bert Cochran of the *American Socialist;* Victor Perlo, one of Elizabeth Bentley's victims; and Michael Zaslow.

Only Dr. Blumberg appeared. He invoked the Fifth amendment on everything but his name. There was nothing even in the questions asked by Senator Butler, who sat as a one-man subcommittee, or by Robert Morris, the committee counsel, which indicated any crime other than participating with Communists in the formation of a broad discussion group.

Policing Thought

Whether another hearing will be held was left vague. The hearing ended with a request by Senator Butler to the Justice Department to begin proceedings against the new Forum before the Subversive Activities Control Board. Here in action again was the monstrous assumption that the FBI, the Internal Security Committee and the SACB have a right to monitor and police political discussion in this country. This is how they keep watch over intellectuals and "internal security" in Moscow, too. The Forum must be defended against the Inquisitors.

Politically, however, the Forum seems a dubious venture. Its basic assumption is that non-Communist and Communist Leftists can through discussion find a common ground for Socialist "education." I doubt it. Not only in the Soviet Union, but in Yugoslavia and even in Poland, there has been retrogression in recent months from the first promise of the de-Stalinization campaign. The real reform within the Soviet Union which the 20th Congress seemed to presage has evaporated.

The Western Communist parties, in Italy, France and Britain, have fallen back into Stalinist goose-step. Only here in the United States, one vigorous faction led by John Gates and his colleagues of the *Daily Worker*, have been fighting for a new departure. But the Stalinist wing under Foster and the slippery "Centrists" under Eugene Dennis can probably purge the Gates group whenever it serves their purpose.

I have the greatest respect for the Rev. A. J. Muste. Among the members of the National Committee he has formed are some of my best friends. I know their purity of purpose and independence of spirit. But this Forum is regarded by the Communists as the first step toward a new political formation in which they can play a leading role. And until the Communist party itself is dissolved, I see no way to bring about a healthy new orientation on the Left.

Adepts at Manipulation

The Communists are adept in the organizational tactics by which a small tail can wag a large dog. They will stultify any new movement as they stultified the Progressive Party. As soon as they feel strong enough to do so, they will ride herd again on the intellectuals, making them swallow whatever rubbish Moscow regurgitates. Let us not forget how the *New Masses* made writers of Albert Maltz's stature crawl when they dared questioned party line.

How can those of us who really believe in freedom join forces with those for whom civil liberty is but a cynical and self-serving tactic, to be abandoned for thought control wherever they are in command? How build a new movement to meet American needs in alliance with people who will jump through the hoops again on signal from Moscow?

There are still good and devoted people in the Communist party but they will not make reliable allies until the Party disappears. Until then, we must defend its rights 100 percent but beware any attempt to reestablish its influence.

Bulletin at Press Time

Teachers Need Not Inform

Another indication of the abating witch hunt was a decision by State Supreme Court Justice Donald S. Taylor in New York upholding the ruling by State Education Commissioner Dr. James E. Allen that schoolteachers could not be dismissed for refusing to act as political informers.

Judge Taylor ruled on two appeals brought against the Commissioners' ruling by the New York City Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education. Involved in the former were four school teachers and a school principal who acknowledged past membership in the Communist party but declined to identify others they had known. Involved in the latter was the case of Associate Professor Charles W. Hughes of Hunter College, who has also refused to be an informer.

City Corporation Counsel Peter Campbell Brown argued that the refusal to inform "impeded" the efforts of New York City to root suspected Communists out of teaching. Judge Taylor held that neither the Feinberg law nor the rules of the Boards of Education provided for discharge on refusal to inform.

New and Encouraging Developments in the Field of Civil Liberties

Our newest Justice, Whittaker, joined the liberal majority last Monday in a 7-2 per curiam order affirming a 3-judge lower bench ruling that the Attorney General had no right to bar a deportable alien from Communist "activity." The appellant, Mrs. Antonia Sentner, came here at the age of 8 and has lived in St. Louis for nearly 30 years. She is the mother of two native born children and the wife of a Smith Act victim. She was ordered deported in 1953. The supervisory restrictions against which Mrs. Sentner appealed were so ludicrous that she was only allowed to "associate" with her husband if such associations were not "in furtherance of the doctrines, policies or activities" of the Communist party.

Another encouraging action by the Supreme Court last week was its agreement to hear the appeal of Herman Beilan, a Philadelphia schoolteacher discharged for "incompetency" after pleading the Fifth amendment before the House Un-American Activities Committee. He was one of 26 school teachers dismissed after the House Committee held hearings in that city, and his case may determine those of others now on appeal.

Argument was also heard before the full bench of the Court of Appeals here last Monday on the first test of the Immunity Act as applied to witnesses before Congressional committees. The defeatist tenor of the Senate Internal Security Committee pleading was only another indication that this part of the Immunity Act is likely to be thrown out as unconstitutional. The portion of the Act upheld last year by the Supreme Court in the Ullmann case applies only to witnesses before grand juries.

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A Congressman From Backward Mississippi Puts Our Liberals to Shame

(*Continued from Page One*)

cutting everything else but the military? How can there possibly be wise and adequate expenditure in the field of social welfare if the military are allowed a blank check, a blank check they fill in every year with ever larger amounts?

At page 94 of the Mahon committee report (which was accepted as the full House Committee report), there is a separate section of "additional views" filed by one Congressman who felt the committee did not go far enough. "I firmly believe," he wrote (though only to have his words ignored by the press), "that about 30 percent of defense spending is excessive, is causing inflation, provides no real defense, and by being built into our domestic economy constitutes a real threat to our nation." He said he had been in Russia last year and what he saw "was completely opposite to the impression we had from information furnished our subcommittee by U.S. military witnesses." He felt that the Russian military menace had been built up here beyond all reasonable proportions in order to scare up higher military appropriations.

A Huge Gravy Train

This dissenter protested that defense had become a gravy train, that the 80 billions spent on war orders with the 50 leading military contractors had tripled the value of their stock in five years. He pointed out that in the case of the aircraft companies the government paid most of the cost of their facilities and gave them five year amortization on the balance. "Yet the total profits to these aircraft companies, with little investment and practically no risk," he disclosed indignantly, "increased last year, though total sales were less than the preceding year." He said testimony taken by the subcommittee in the past three years showed "great waste", and "great duplication." He warned, "The records show we are rapidly tying our domestic economy to the military, which has always been a threat to the safety of any nation. History shows," he added, "that in Germany and Japan and every other major country, whenever the domestic economy got tied to the military, it has led to war."

This dissenter ended by recalling that five years ago the Chief of the National Production Authority "told me privately that if he were Joe Stalin and wanted to wreck the economy of the United States, he would declare five years of peace" because the loss of military spending would create a major depression. "If that 30 percent extra effort due to war and the preparedness for defense is the basis for our material prosperity," this dissenter pleaded, "then why not continue to put forth that 30 percent extra effort, not in needless waste which leaves us a poorer country but in work that will improve our country? Why can't we put forth that extra effort in reforesting our lands, harnessing our streams for electricity, reclaiming our lands through soil conservation and in those things that make our country richer and better?"

It Wasn't Upton Sinclair

Whose name was signed to this moving appeal? Not Walter Reuther or Upton Sinclair or Alvin Hansen or Reinhold Niebuhr or Jerry Voorhis or Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., or Robert R. Nathan or Max Lerner or Alex Rose or Max Zaritsky. Their names were signed to the ADA manifesto of the 59 in uncritical support of the President's budget, its swollen military estimates included. The signer of this "dissent" was a Democratic Congressman from benighted Mississippi, James L. Whitten, a senior member of the powerful conservative House Appropriations Committee. It is a melancholy day for American liberalism when its leading spokesmen act as a sounding board for the military budget makers while it is left to a conservative Mississippi Democrat to say what Reuther, Upton Sinclair or Alvin Hansen would have had said a few years ago.

Their silence today reflects the vast and inhibiting shadow cast across American life by the sheer size of the military budget. Labor as well as capital now depends upon it, and labor leaders, too, would rather acquiesce in the arms race than risk unemployment. The colleges and a whole strata of intellectuals live off the search for ever more ingenious weapons. The race for the ultimate destroyer has created a market for brains; mathematicians and physicists are at a premium. The intellectuals, like the capitalists and the labor leaders, are loath to bite the hand that feeds them. In addition, for a liberal, who has in his time signed 30 round robins and joined a half dozen organizations long dead but now suspect, criticism of military budget and the arms race is an occupational hazard. He might be accused of being "soft on communism."

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